2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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watchfulness, prowling fully armed, peering into the shadows or standing silent and watchful in some dark corner. Then, when at last his rival appeared, the fight would take place in grim silence, broken only by the clash of spear and shield, for it was said to be a point of honour for the *reth* not to call for help.

Though many commoners will give some such account there is no reason to suppose that the above represents what really happened during the recent period before the Mahdia. It is, however, probable that these tales reproduce with tolerable fidelity a state of affairs that once existed among the Shilluk. Two survivals of the conditions outlined may indeed persist: the sleepy condition of king Fadiet on the few occasions on which we saw him may really have been due, as was said, to his keeping awake at night and sleeping only by day, and the sham fights which take place during the complicated ceremonial of the consecration of a new king may represent former battles.

In recent times the leading part in the killing of the *reth* has been assigned to the *ororo*, the descendants of the brothers of Ocalo the fifth king of the Shilluk. It is generally believed among well-informed Shilluk that their sixth king, Duwad, was first killed ceremonially, but according to one account Tugo, the tenth king, was the first to suffer. Reliable information concerning the actual killing of the *reth* during recent times is not forthcoming. It is said that the *ororo* and some of the chiefs announce his fate to him, after which he is taken to a hut specially built for the occasion and strangled. The reasons determining the *ororo* to act are said to be the ill-health of the *reth*, or his incapacity to satisfy his many wives, which is regarded as an undoubted sign of senescence. Concerning this there are two popularly received accounts. One states that his wives would themselves strangle the *reth*, but we believe this to be incorrect; the other is to the effect that the wives notify their husband's shortcomings to some of the chiefs, who tell them to indicate to the *reth* his approaching death. It is widely believed that this is done by spreading a piece of cloth over his face and over his knees as he lies sleeping during the afternoon.

Ignoring these discrepancies and recent practice, there is little doubt that the old custom was to take the *reth* and one nubile maiden (or possibly two) to a specially built hut, the opening of which was then walled up so that the inmates, left without water or food, died of starvation and suffocation. This practice was said to have been given up some five generations ago on account of the suffering of the *reth*,